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Department of State

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INCOMING TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-15

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Argentina

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 10-14 ADS-00 SSD-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO NIACT IMMEDIATE
SECSTATE WASHDC 5062
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 3253

USEEC

MEXICO FOR LABATT: PLEASE PASS SUBSTANCE TO AFL-CIO DELEGATION

E.O. 12065: XDS-4 4/13/00 (CHAPLIN, MAXWELL) OR-H
TAGS: ELAB CHUM ICFIU ILO AR
SUBJECT: (U) NEW SHIFTS IN ARGENTINE TRADE UNION FACTIONS: MIGUEL
FREE BUT STRIPPED OF CIVIL RIGHTS

REF: BUENOS AIRES 2839

1. ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: THE GOA IS ENGAGED IN PULLING OFF ANOTHER COUP WITHIN THE LABOR MOVEMENT, INDUCING MODERATE LEADERS TO REORGANIZE THE PROVISIONAL GROUP KNOWN AS CONDUCCION UNICA DE TRABAJADORES ARGENTINOS (CUT) TO THE EXCLUSION OF HARDLINE PERONIST MILITANTS. ANTI-VERTICALISTS AND INDEPENDENT UNION ELEMENTS WHICH REMAINED OUTSIDE OF CUTA ARE COOPERATING IN THIS PLAN, ALONG WITH THE "CNT" FACTION OF CUTA. AN APPARENT OBJECTIVE IS TO GET A RELATIVELY MALLEABLE WORKER DELEGATION TO ATTEND THE UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE. THIS MANEUVER HAS SPLIT CUTA AND THERE ARE NOW TWO RIVAL ARGENTINE LABOR DELEGATIONS ATTENDING THE ORIT CONFERENCE IN MEXICO -- INEVITABLY CAUSING SLIPPAGE IN OUR ORIT AFFILIATION EXPECTATIONS MEANWHILE, EX-LABOR CAPO LORENZO MIGUEL HAS FINALLY BEEN RELEASED FROM HOUSE ARREST STATUS. ALTHOUGH HE REMAINS UNDER THE ACT OF INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND DEPRIVED OF HIS CIVIL RIGHTS, HOW ACTIVE MIGUEL WILL BECOME AND WHETHER HIS FREEDOM WILL EVENTUALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE TRADE UNION EQUATION REMAINS TO BE SEEN. THE TERMS OF HIS RELEASE MAKE CLEAR THAT HE IS EXPECTED TO KEEP OUT OF POLITICAL AND TRADE UNION BUSINESS AND HE PROBABLY WILL KEEP HIS NOSE CLEAN -- AT LEAST FOR AN INITIAL PERIOD. (WE UNDERSTAND HE MAY BE CONTEMPLATING A TRIP ABROAD.) BUT AS THE ROUSING HERO'S WELCOME FOR HIM IN HIS LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD SUGGESTS, A HUGE CHUNK OF THE PERONIST MOVEMENT NOW REGARDS HIM AS THEIR CAUDILLO AND WE BELIEVE THAT PERONIST LABOR RESISTANCE TO GOA PLANS IS BOUND TO INCREASE.

3. THE SPLIT IN CUTA HAS WIDENED SINCE OUR LAST REPORT (REFTEL). AS THE US TRADE UNION DELEGATION TO THE ORIT CONFERENCE IN MEXICO IS ALREADY AWARE, THERE ARE FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES TWO ARGENTINE TRADE UNION DELEGATIONS NOW IN CUERNAVACA: (A) NAVAL ELECTRICIAN VENTURINI, TELEPHONE WORKER PERRONE, AND LEATHER WORKER AVELINO FERNANDEZ FOR THE "MODERATE" COMISION NACIONAL DE TRABAJOS (CNT); AND (B) GARCIA (EX-TAXI LEADER), MILLAN (GLASS EMPLOYEES), AND PEREZ (TRUCKERS) FOR THE MOVIMIENTO

SINDICAL PERONISTA (MSP), OR EX-COMMITTEE OF 25. AFL-CIO REPRESENTATIVE TORRES-LAZO'S MEETING WITH THE CUTA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE TO INFORM THEM OF AFL-CIO PRESIDENT KIRKLAND'S INVITATION TO MEET WITH HIM IN CUERNAVACA SLOWED DOWN THE CENTRIFUGAL PROCESS ONLY BRIEFLY.

4. IT IS PROBABLY THE CNT WHICH BEARS THE GREATER RESPONSIBILITY FOR HAVING PRECIPITATED THE SPLIT AND WE BELIEVE THAT WE SEE THE GOVERNMENT'S HAND BEHIND THAT MANEUVER, BUT THE MCP HAD JUST ABOUT EXHAUSTED ITS INTEREST IN MAINTAINING THE CUTA FACADE AS WELL. BEHIND THIS MOVE, WE THINK, IS THE MINISTRY OF LABOR'S PERENNIAL INTEREST IN HAVING AN ARGENTINE WORKER DELEGATION PRESENT AT THE ILO CONFERENCE IN GENEVA IN JUNE IN ORDER TO GAIN INTERNATIONAL APPEARANCES -- A DELEGATION AS MODERATE BUT ALSO AS REPRESENTATIVE AS POSSIBLE. A CLOSELY RELATED AIM IS TO SPLIT THE MCP, ISOLATING THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT PERONIST "OUROS" E.G. GARCIA, THE CLAT-ORIENTED DIGN, AUTOWORKER LEADER RODRIGUEZ, ETC. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE NATURAL INTEREST OF THE ARGENTINE TRADE UNION LEADERS TO ATTEND THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IN ORDER TO KEEP THEIR NAMES IN PRINT AND THEIR FUTURE LEADERSHIP PROSPECTS ALIVE. LABOR UNDERSECRETARY ROJAS, WE BELIEVE HAS SUBTLY ORCHESTRATED A SERIES OF TRADE UNION MEETINGS WITH THE AIM OF REORGANIZING THE OFFICIALLY NON-RECOGNIZED NATIONAL UNION BOARD AROUND THREE BASIC POLES: (A) THE CNT; (B) THE "GROUP OF 20" ANTI-VERTICALISTS AND INDEPENDENTS (SQDA WORKER RACCHINI, HOODEHEAD RJ BARRIONUEVO, RAILWAY ENGINEER LEADER ETCHEGARAY, ETC.) WHICH HAD PURPOSEFULLY REFUSED TO JOIN CUTA FROM THE START IN ORDER NOT TO SPEND ITSELF IN FUTILE CONFLICT WITH THE GOVERNMENT; AND (C) ANY ELEMENTS OF THE MCP WHICH MIGHT BE WILLING TO GO ALONG WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S GAME. IN OTHER WORDS, ALMOST A CARBON COPY OF LAST YEAR'S PERFORMANCE WHEN, UNDER GOA URGING, THE CNT AND GROUP OF 20 TURNED THEIR BACKS ON THE "25" LEADERS THEN IN JAIL AND WENT OFF TO ATTEND THE GENEVA CONFERENCE (CEE 79 BUENOS AIRES 40901).

5. POSTAL WORKER LEADER BALDASSINI (PROTECT) HAS CONFIDED TO AFL-CIO REPRESENTATIVE TORRES-LAZO THAT THE MEETINGS A WEEK AGO BETWEEN THE LABOR MINISTER AND SELECTED UNION LEADERS WAS DESIGNED TO GET THE STATE GOV A REQUEST FROM CAREFULLY SELECTED LABOR LEADERS FOR GOA PERMISSION

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full

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TO HOLD A PLENUM TO DISCUSS--NOT WORKER GRIEVANCES OVER WAGES, THE TRADE UNION AND PROJECTED SOCIAL PROTECTS LEGISLATION AND RECENT FACTORY DISMISSEALS --BUT RATHER TO NAME A WORKER DELEGATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE (I) IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PREARRANGED PLAN, THE MINISTRY HAS NOW WINKED BACK THAT SUCH A PLENUM WOULD BE "ACCEPTABLE", BUT THE DATE HAS NOT BEEN DEFINITELY FIXED. ACCORDING TO BALDASSINI, THE PLENUM'S BASIC PURPOSE IS TO RESTRUCTURE THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF CUTA (WITH THE MAKEUP OF THE ILO WORKER DELEGATION REFLECTING THAT NEW REALITY). THE PLENUM WILL ALSO CONFIRM LOCAL METAL WORKER ACTING SECRETARY MARCOS AS CUTA'S DESIGNATE TO THE ICFTU BOARD, AS A PLACEBO FOR TORRESLAZO AND THE AFL CIO, BALDASSINI THREW IN THE PROMISE THAT WHEN THE DELEGATION GETS TO GENEVA IT WILL FORMALLY REQUEST AFFILIATION WITH UNIT, I--THUS DASHING HOPES THAT THE MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE WILL BE SIGNED IN CUERNAVACA).

6. ONE OF THE IMPLICATIONS BEHIND THIS GAME PLAN IS THAT THE CNT, EITHER ON ITS OWN OR UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE GOVERNMENT, HAS DECIDED TO DOWNGRADE THE CUERNAVACA MEETING. THIS IS EVIDENT FROM THE FACT THAT NONE OF THE FIRST-LINE CNT LEADERS WERE SELECTED TO GO TO THE ORIT CONFERENCE. UNDOUBTEDLY THEY HAVE GOOD REASON. THERE ARE BIGGER FISH TO FRY FOR THEM IN BUENOS AIRES THIS WEEK, SINCE LISTS OF CANDIDATES ARE BEING DRAWN UP FOR THE GENEVA WORKER DELEGATION. ALSO, BALDASSINI'S UNION HAS AN ANNUAL MEETING THIS WEEK. HOWEVER, WE ALSO SUSPECT THAT THEY DID NOT WISH TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE TRADE UNION RIGHTS DISCUSSIONS IN CUERNAVACA, AS THIS WOULD HAVE PREJUDICED THEIR UNDERSTANDING WITH THE GOVERNMENT.

7. BUT NOW THERE IS A NEW FACTOR TO ASSESS. FORMER METALWORKER AND JO-ORGANIZATION BOSS LORENZO MIGUEL'S HOUSE ARREST STATUS WAS LIFTED AT 3 AM APRIL 17 FOLLOWING A JUNTA DECISION WHICH NEVERTHELESS STIPULATED THAT HE WAS STILL INCLUDED UNDER THE TERMS OF THE ACT OF INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THEREFORE WOULD CONTINUE TO BE DEPRIVED OF HIS CIVIL RIGHTS. (FORMER CONSTRUCTION WORKER LEADER ROHELIO PAPAGHO WAS ALSO RELIEVED OF CONDITIONAL LIBERTY STATUS.) IN ANNOUNCING THIS ACTION THE JUNTA DID NOT PUBLICLY EXPLAIN THE REASONING BEHIND ITS DECISION TO RELEASE MIGUEL, OR ITS JUSTIFICATION FOR KEEPING HIM UNDER THE ACT. HOWEVER, JUNTA MEMBER (AIR FORCE COMMANDER) GENERAL GRAFFIGNA, IN A PUBLIC CEREMONY APRIL 16, STATED THAT THE INSTITUTIONAL ACT OF JUNE 1976 PROVIDED FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF PENALTIES FOR 37 PERSONS "WHO HAD DONE GREAT DAMAGE TO THE REPUBLIC." SAID GRAFFIGNA: "AS THE PERSONS INCLUDED UNDER THESE DECREES SERVE OUT THE TERMS ORDERED BY THE JUNTA, THEY WILL BE TAKEN OFF THE ACT." HOW-

EVER, HE ADDED, WITHOUT SPECIFICALLY REFERRING TO MIGUEL'S CASE, "THERE MAY BE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE RECOVERED THEIR LIBERTY, BUT PERHAPS HAVE THREE OR FOUR (OTHER) TYPES OF PENALTIES TO PAY WHICH ARE OF A SECRET CHARACTER"--PRESUMABLY A REFERENCE TO THE CONTINUING PROHIBITION AGAINST MIGUEL'S EXERCISE OF HIS CIVIL RIGHTS.

3. SO FAR THE GOVERNMENT HAS RUN RINGS AROUND THE ARGENTINE TRADE UNION LEADERS AND MOST OF THEM HAVE BEEN WILLING TO JUMP THROUGH THE HOOPS IN ORDER TO RETAIN THEIR POSITIONS. AT THIS POINT IT SEEMS FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT A WORKER DELEGATION WILL BE FIELDDED TO GENEVA, ALTHOUGH SOME SLIPPAGE IN THE DATE SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE FOR HOLDING THE PLENUM IN WHICH THE GAME PLAN WAS TO HAVE BEEN ORCHESTRATED. THE ULTIMATE IMPACT WHICH MIGUEL'S RELEASE WILL HAVE ON THE MOVEMENT REMAINS TO BE SEEN. SOURCES ASSESS THAT NO DEAL WAS MADE WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND INDEED THE FACT THAT HE REMAINS STRIPPED OF HIS RIGHTS SUGGESTS THAT THIS MAY BE SO. WE UNDERSTAND FROM HIS LIEUTENANTS THAT HE INTENDS TO PROCEED VERY SLOWLY, TAKING HIS FAMILY AWAY FOR A VACATION IN THE MOUNTAINS AND POSSIBLY EVEN MAKING A TRIP ABROAD. THE GOVERNMENT CALLS MIGUEL A THUG AND STORIES AROUND ABOUT HUGE GRAFT AND CORRUPTION IN HIS UNION, MASSIVE ARMIES OF PRIVATE BODYGUARDS AND POSSIBLY EVEN AN ASSASSINATION HERE OR THERE, BUT THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO PROVE ONE iota OF THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM AND HAS RELEASED HIM. WE DO NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHY AS YET. PERHAPS INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE INCLUDING THAT OF THE VATICAN PLAYED A ROLE. BUT AS THE PUBLICITY SURROUNDING HIS FESTIVE THREE HOUR WALK THROUGH HIS BARRIO YESTERDAY SUGGESTS, THE PERONISTS FINALLY HAVE A CAUDILLO ON THE STREETS AGAIN AND THE MOOD OVER THE LONG RUN IN WHAT WE THINK ARE THE MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THAT MOVEMENT WILL BE INCREASINGLY THAT OF OUTWARD OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT.

9. WE WOULD APPRECIATE A REPORT FROM MEXICO ON THE RESULTS OF THE ARGENTINE PARTICIPATION IN CUERNAVACA, INCLUDING THE MEETING WITH AFL-CIO PRESIDENT KIRKLAND.
CASTRO

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